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## ABOUT ZIONISM



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# ABOUT ZIONISM

SPEECHES AND LETTERS

BY

PROFESSOR ALBERT EINSTEIN

*Translated and Edited with an Introduction*

BY

LEON SIMON

NEW YORK

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1931

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Set up and printed. Published February, 1931.

SET UP BY BROWN BROTHERS LINOTYPERS  
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
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## ABOUT ZIONISM



## INTRODUCTION

THERE are two main ways of approach to Zionism. One starts from those Jews who are made to suffer for being Jews, the other from the smaller number who are not. In the one case Zionism means the transfer of masses of Jews from countries in which they are obviously not wanted to a country which they might call their own; in the other case it means the re-creation in Palestine of a Hebraic type of life, which will be regarded by all Jews as the embodiment of their own distinctive outlook and ideals, and will thus help to counteract the inevitable tendency of the Jews, when they are not driven back on themselves by external restrictions, to lose their sense of being a separate people.

Of these two conceptions of Zionism, the former has the more direct and obvious ap-

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peal. The fact that masses of Jews are made to suffer for the crime of being Jews and wishing to remain Jews is too patent to call for demonstration; and, while it is true that in some countries Jewish disabilities have been removed so far as that can be done by statute, bitter experience engenders a sceptical attitude towards the idea that universal emancipation will provide a panacea for the Jew's troubles. In the first place, the countries with the largest numbers of Jews are not all eager to admit them to full equality; and in the second place, even where equality has been accorded, dislike of the Jew often makes itself felt too strongly for his liking or comfort. Hence, from the point of view of a Jew who wishes to see his people better off in the world than it is to-day, or has been these many centuries, there is much to commend a scheme which sets out to cut at the root of the trouble by removing all the victims of anti-Semitism to a land of their own. By con-

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trast with this perfectly simple and intelligible idea, the other conception of Zionism appears abstruse, almost other-worldly. The problem to which it offers a solution is one of which the existence, let alone the urgency, is not readily realised by ordinary men and women. It requires no great exercise of thought or imagination to appreciate the unenviable position of the Jewish masses, or the desirability of transporting them to a safe home of refuge. It is less easy to recognise that the emancipated Jew presents, from the point of view of Jewish survival, at least as difficult a problem as the unemancipated; that the very removal of restrictions on the political and economic freedom of the Jews in this or that country creates conditions which are more inimical than persecution to the maintenance of whatever is worthily distinctive of the Jew as such; that the consequent disintegration of an ancient people, involving the disappearance of one of the

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world's great cultures, is even more tragic than the material ills of the Jewish masses; and that the paramount need of the hour is a safe home of refuge for the Jewish spirit. The line of argument here briefly indicated takes us into the realm of abstract and metaphysical conceptions, of which the common man is impatient. It presupposes the idea that the reality of a people's being is to be found in its distinctive "spirit," by which it is differentiated from other peoples, and that a people lives just in so far as it is able freely to embody its spirit in the forms and activities of an organised corporate existence of its own. It regards a people as something bigger than the sum-total of the individuals who compose it at any given time, as a personality with a soul and a life and a history; it regards the well-being of a people as something not to be measured in terms of the material prosperity or the political freedom of its individual members. In relation to the



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Jewish people in particular, it sees the crux of the problem in the fact that the national personality is unable, in present conditions, to be creatively self-expressive; and it seeks to save the people by securing for it the possibility of another period of self-expression, naturally in the only land which the people can in any sense call its own. This type of Zionism, often called "Spiritual Zionism," is more subtle and more radical than the other, which is known, even less appropriately, as "Political Zionism." It can be defended on philosophical grounds, and, despite its apparent abstractness, on strictly practical grounds; but it does not speak with the clarion voice that rallies millions to a banner.

Hence it is not surprising that Zionism did not begin to assume the proportions of a large popular movement before 1895, when Theodor Herzl, in his *Judenstaat*, propounded the beautifully simple idea of finding, on some more or less unoccupied portion of the

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earth's surface, an autonomous home of refuge for those Jews who could not or would not become completely assimilated to their surroundings. Herzl did much more than propound the idea: he spent the rest of his brief and care-laden days in working for its realisation. He created the Zionist Organisation, the Jewish Colonial Trust to provide financial backing for the diplomatic work of Zionism, the Jewish National Fund to purchase land in Palestine. He gave to the Jewish masses the hope and the vision for which they had unconsciously been yearning, and fired their imagination as it had not been fired for many a long year. But his actual plan did not come to fruition. There was no country which could be turned into a Jewish country. The only land of which the Jews were willing to think as potentially their own was Palestine. As individuals they were ready (and, in those days, able) to migrate from Eastern Europe to countries already

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developed, and to fit themselves as best they might into the existing national structures; for a national home of their own they wanted Palestine and Palestine only. But Palestine was not suitable for a rapid mass-settlement; and even if it had been, neither the requisite political conditions nor the necessary financial resources were forthcoming. If the life of the Zionist Organisation had depended on its prospect of accomplishing within a measurable time the mass-migration and the autonomous state which were fundamental to Herzl's original conception, it would not have lived for ten years. In fact, there was something more behind it than a grandiose but impracticable vision. "Spiritual Zionism," despite its lack of mass appeal, was yet able in the hour of need to provide an objective which could keep the Organisation together when its original *raison d'être* had disappeared. Not, of course, that the Organisation officially adopted the philosophy of

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Spiritual Zionism as its own. Its programme, its phraseology, its visions remained unchanged. But as a matter of hard fact, it reconciled itself to comparatively small-scale work in the field of Palestinian development. The settlement of some thousands of Jews on the soil of Palestine, the concurrent growth of Jewish industry in the principal towns, the creation of a network of Hebrew schools—these and similar activities, important as a demonstration of the unimpaired capacity of the Jew to re-make the forms of his own life under modern conditions, and as a means of reviving the practical interest of the Jewish people in Palestine, bore no intelligible relation to the vision of a safe home of refuge for the oppressed masses of Jewry. And to a large extent theory was inevitably influenced by practice. Zionists came to recognise not only that the idea of transporting the Jewish masses of Eastern Europe to Palestine was a will-o'-the-wisp, but also that there was posi-

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tive Jewish value in the establishment in Palestine of a relatively small nucleus of the Jewish people, speaking its own language and developing its own culture on the basis of a healthy economic structure. Nor, so long as Palestine remained in the hands of the Turks, did the question of the political future of this nucleus achieve practical importance.

The Balfour Declaration of 1917, and the British Mandate for Palestine, changed the situation in two respects. The establishment of a progressive and friendly régime in Palestine removed many of the obstacles which had hampered Jewish development before the war; and Zionism has taken full advantage of the wider opportunities thus afforded, allowance being made for the fact that the Jewish people has suffered certainly not less than others from the impoverishment and the weariness of the post-war world. The Jewish population of Palestine has more than doubled in the last dozen years, and is now

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in the neighbourhood of 160,000, about one-fifth of the total population of the country. Jews have developed modern methods in agriculture and industry, have drained marshes and brought neglected areas under cultivation, have successfully fought the endemic diseases of the land, and have done a great deal in the direction of raising the general level of health and well-being. They have crowned their educational edifice with a Hebrew University, have made the Hebrew language once more their own, and on the foundation of this linguistic revival have achieved at least the first steps in the evolution of a type of individual and of life which can be called Jewish, or Hebrew, without any hyphen. These developments are of some value to the world at large, in so far as they mean the cultivation of a long neglected estate. They are of benefit to the Arabs of Palestine, as bringing them wider cultural opportunities and a higher standard of life.

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They are of supreme importance to Jews the world over, not only because they have provided many thousands of Jews from Eastern Europe with a better and healthier way of life, but more particularly because of the tonic effect of this gradual unfolding of the creative capacities of a people which has learnt, seeing itself through the eyes of others, to regard itself as incurably parasitic, and has forgotten, under the stress of persecution and the blandishments of emancipation, that it has a great moral and intellectual heritage of its own. Not the least noteworthy effect of Zionist work in Palestine is the general quickening among Jews all over the world of the sense of belonging spiritually together, which is exemplified in the recently achieved union of Zionists and non-Zionists in the Jewish Agency for Palestine.

At the same time, the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate have brought into the foreground the hitherto dormant question of the

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political status and future of the Jewish community in Palestine itself. The Declaration contemplates "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." It says nothing explicitly about the status of the Palestinian Jews, who are not, and are unlikely to be, more than a comparatively small fraction of that Jewish people to which the national home is promised. But it was naturally understood, both by those who gave and by those who received it, as implying a national status for that part of the Jewish people which is or will be in the national home itself. Nobody doubts that the Mandate was within the intention of the Declaration in recognising the Jews of Palestine as one of the national groups of the country—a recognition most clearly exemplified in the status given to Hebrew as one of the official languages of Palestine. The Declaration means, in other words, that Palestine is not, as some people seem still to think, an Arab



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country into which Jews may or may not be permitted to enter. It is a country to which a Jew as such has a right to belong; it is in some senses a Jewish land. But how much, or how little, is this going to mean in practice? Is Palestine intended to become wholly a Jewish land, in the sense that only its Jewish inhabitants will control its destinies (in so far as the destinies of any small country can be controlled by its inhabitants) and any others will have only such rights as the Jews see fit to allow them? If that position is unthinkable while the Jews are in a minority, would it be possible if they became a majority?

Justice and common-sense seem to dictate a negative answer to these questions. The two national groups which are recognised as belonging to Palestine, the Jewish and the Arab, ought to develop side by side on a basis of political equality. There ought to be no possibility of the domination of Arab by Jew

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or of the exclusion of Jew by Arab. The question of majority or minority ought at no time, either now or in the future, to affect the principle of national equality. But nothing of this kind is clearly laid down in the Balfour Declaration; and even if it had been, there is no guarantee that the Arabs of Palestine would have accepted it as a reasonable view. For, rather paradoxically, one of the effects of the recognition of Jewish national aspirations has been to stimulate a Palestinian Arab nationalism which scarcely existed before; and the spokesmen of this nationalism, unwilling to admit a Jewish claim even to equal rights in the country, are naturally anxious to persuade themselves and the world that the Jewish claim is not for equal rights, but for predominance. That idea, again, though flatly at variance with official Zionist declarations, has derived some colour from the exuberances of less responsible Zionists, and has had a favourable atmosphere in the

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general vagueness of the political situation. Arab intransigence has naturally not encouraged the development on the Jewish side of a policy of active co-operation between the two national groups, which would at best have been difficult enough by reason of the difference in their cultural levels and of the fact that the Jews are as yet imperfectly Palestinianised, and have to bend all their efforts to the securing of their own position in the country. In the result, the two national groups have remained, in all but the merely literal sense, too far apart for a spirit of mutual confidence to develop; and Arab politicians, perhaps genuinely afraid of imaginary Zionist ambitions, have had no great difficulty in stirring up mob passion on more than one occasion. The lamentable outbreak of violence in August 1929 may be said to have brought matters to a head. It has not, of course, affected the inherent reasonableness of Zionist aims, or the determination of

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Jews both in and out of Palestine to carry through the work of reconstruction which they have begun; but it has emphasised the desirability of taking active steps to bring about an understanding between the two peoples, instead of leaving it to time and slow education to bridge the gap. On the Arab side there is as yet scarcely any overt sign of a realisation of the need for a more constructive policy than that of demanding the repeal of the Balfour Declaration. But this attitude of mere negation can scarcely persist in the face of the Government's clear statement of its intention to give the Declaration effect; and there is no need to despair of a solution which will bring about permanent peace. There is no reason to anticipate any obstacle to such a solution on the Zionist side, though it has to be admitted that the recent handling of the situation by the Mandatory Power has not tended to strengthen the hands of those Zionists who are most firmly convinced of the

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wisdom and the justice of a policy of moderation.

Professor Einstein, some of whose scattered speeches and letters on Zionism and kindred questions are collected in this volume, is better known to the world as a physicist than as a Zionist. Yet for many years past he has given abundant proof both of a keen interest in Zionism and of a penetrating insight into its underlying ideas. Himself an assimilated Jew, he is impelled to Zionism by his acute consciousness of the excessive price at which the blessings of assimilation are bought by the Jewish communities of the Western world, which for him are mainly represented by that of Germany. The price is a loss of solidarity, of moral independence and of self-respect. These, in his view, can be regained only if assimilated Jews find some common task, of absolute human value, to which they can bend their corporate energies as Jews. Such a task is to be found in the

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restoration of Jewish national life in Palestine, which involves the regeneration of Palestine itself and its transformation into a living and productive country. The fact that this regenerated Palestine will offer a home of refuge for many oppressed Jews is of secondary importance. What matters most is the new moral freedom and health which Jewry will gain through devotion to an ideal at once Jewish and broadly human, and through the gradual emergence in Palestine of a civilisation at once Jewish and modern. Jewish nationalism is justified, even to a mind so essentially internationalist as Professor Einstein's, because without it the survival of the Jew is neither worth while nor ultimately possible. But, as might be expected, there is in Professor Einstein's nationalism no room for any kind of aggressiveness or chauvinism. For him the domination of Jew over Arab in Palestine, or the perpetuation of a state of mutual hostility between the two

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peoples, would mean the failure of Zionism. The events of August 1929 bitterly disappointed the hopes that he had built on the apparently friendly relations between working Jews and working Arabs in Palestine, and on the advantages obviously derived by the Arab population from the Jewish development of the country; they have not altered his conviction that the realisation of the true aims of Zionism can be sought only along the line of peace and co-operation between Jews and Arabs. Throughout this difficult period he has been prominent among those Zionists who have urged most strongly a policy of active peace-seeking: indeed he has, perhaps inevitably, exposed himself to criticism for what the generality of Zionists regard at present as a somewhat extreme and premature advocacy of that policy.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem represents a side of Zionist activity which naturally makes a peculiarly strong appeal to

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Professor Einstein, and he has been an active member of the Governing Body of the University since its inception. He is, however, no less alive to the necessity and value of a solid material basis for the development of a Jewish civilisation in Palestine; and some years ago he undertook a tour of the United States on behalf of the Keren Hayesod (Palestine Foundation Fund). This combination of academic with practical interests, coupled with his transparent single-mindedness and simplicity of character, has won him the respect and affection of Zionists the world over. The Einstein Forest in Palestine may prove no less enduring a monument to his fame than the Theory of Relativity.

This volume is composed of translations of extracts from speeches and letters delivered and written by Professor Einstein during the last nine or ten years. The speech or letter form has not been preserved, and short passages of purely ephemeral interest have been



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omitted here and there. The arrangement is roughly, but not strictly, chronological. Permission to reprint various passages has been readily given by the editors of the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Jüdische Rundschau* (Berlin), the *New Palestine* (New York), the *Jewish Chronicle* (London), and the *Jüdischer Almanach* (Prague), to all of whom the Editor expresses his grateful acknowledgments.

L. S.

*London,*  
*September 1930.*



## ASSIMILATION AND NATIONALISM



## ASSIMILATION AND NATIONALISM

### I

BEFORE we can effectively combat anti-Semitism, we must first of all educate ourselves out of it and out of the slave-mentality which it betokens. We must have more dignity, more independence, in our own ranks. Only when we have the courage to regard ourselves as a nation, only when we respect ourselves, can we win the respect of others; or rather, the respect of others will then come of itself. Anti-Semitism as a psychological phenomenon will always be with us so long as Jews and non-Jews are thrown together. But where is the harm? It may be thanks to anti-Semitism that we are able to preserve our existence as a race; that at any rate is my belief.

When I come across the phrase "German

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Citizens of the Jewish Persuasion," I cannot avoid a melancholy smile. What does this highfalutin' description really mean? What is this "Jewish persuasion"? Is there, then, a kind of non-persuasion by virtue of which one ceases to be a Jew? There is not. What the description really means is that our *beaux esprits* are proclaiming two things:

First, I wish to have nothing to do with my poor (East European) Jewish brethren;

Secondly, I wish to be regarded not as a son of my people, but only as a member of a religious community.

Is this honest? Can an "Aryan" respect such dissemblers? I am not a German citizen, nor is there anything about me that can be described as "Jewish persuasion." But I am a Jew, and I am glad to belong to the Jewish people, though I do not regard it as "chosen." Let us just leave anti-Semitism to the non-

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Jews, and keep our own hearts warm for our kith and kin.

(1920)

### II

Until about a generation ago the Jews in Germany did not regard themselves as belonging to the Jewish people. They felt themselves only members of a religious community, and many of them still hold this point of view. They are, in fact, much more assimilated than the Russian Jews. They have been to mixed schools, and have thus adapted themselves to German national and cultural life. Nevertheless, and in spite of the equal political rights which they have secured, there exists in Germany a strong movement of social anti-Semitism. And it is just the educated circles who have set themselves up as carriers of this anti-Semitic disease. They have built up for themselves a "culture" of anti-Semitism, while the edu-

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cated Russians, at least before the war, were on the whole philo-Semitic, and made frequent and honest endeavours to fight the anti-Semitic movement.

This phenomenon in Germany is due to several causes. Partly it originates in the fact that Jews there exercise an influence over the intellectual life of the German people altogether out of proportion to their numbers. While, in my opinion, the economic position of the German Jews is very much over-rated, the influence of Jews on the press, in literature and in science in Germany is very marked, as must be apparent to even the most superficial observer. This accounts for the fact that there are many anti-Semites there whose anti-Semitism is not just hatred of the Jew, but is based on arguments in which they honestly believe. They regard Jews as of a nationality different from the German, and therefore are alarmed at the increasing Jewish influence on their national



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life. Although perhaps the percentage of Jews in England is not much less than in Germany, English Jews certainly do not exercise the influence on English society that German Jews do in Germany. This notwithstanding that the highest professional positions are accessible to them, and a Jew can become Lord Chief Justice or Viceroy of India, whereas in Germany the attainment of such positions by a Jew is unthinkable.

In many instances anti-Semitism may be determined by political considerations. It often depends, in other words, on the political party to which a man belongs whether he becomes a professed anti-Semite. A Socialist, for instance, even if he is an anti-Semite by conviction, will not proclaim his creed or act up to it, because it is not in the programme of his party. Among Conservatives, however, it is different. Anti-Semitism in their case arises from a desire to exacerbate for their party purposes the ill-feeling inherent in the popu-

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lace. In a country like England, this influence is smaller than in many others, while the existence of old and deep-rooted liberal traditions hinders the rapid growth of anti-Semitism. I say this without any personal knowledge of the country. I have never until now been in England. That, I would add in parenthesis, perhaps accounts for the enthusiasm with which my theories were received here. But in Germany the judgment of my theories depended on the party politics of the press, while English science did not allow its sense of objectivity to be disturbed by political views. The English people have had a great influence on the development of science, and so have tackled the examination of the theory of relativity with particular energy and particular success. Whilst in America, again, anti-Semitism knows only social forms, in Germany communal anti-Semitism is much stronger even than social. As I view the matter, the fact of the racial peculiarities of Jews

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is bound to have an influence on their social intercourse. I believe that German Judaism is thus being influenced to a great extent by anti-Semitism. With increasing wealth and increasing education the religious customs which formerly prevented the mixing of Jews with Gentiles have tended to disappear. There was thus nothing but the antithesis which Jews represent, and which is called anti-Semitism, to preserve Jewish separateness. Without this antithesis assimilation in Germany would have been complete long ago.

I have noticed this sort of thing in myself. Until two years ago I lived in Switzerland, and during my stay there I did not realise my Judaism. There was nothing that called forth any Jewish sentiments in me. When I moved to Berlin all that changed. There I realised the difficulties with which many young Jews were confronted. I saw how, amid anti-Semitic surroundings, systematic

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study, and with it the road to a safe existence, was made impossible for them. This refers specially to the Eastern-born Jews in Germany, who were continually exposed to provocation. I do not believe that their number is large in Germany as a whole. Only in Berlin are they at all numerous. Nevertheless, their presence has become a public question. At meetings and conferences and in the press there is a movement for disposing of them quickly or interning them. Housing difficulties and the economic depression are used as arguments for these harsh measures. Facts are deliberately exaggerated in order to influence public opinion. These Eastern-born Jews are made the scapegoat of all the ills of present-day German political life and all the after-effects of the war. Incitement against these unfortunate fugitives, who have only just saved themselves from the hell which Eastern Europe means for them to-day, has become an effective political weapon,

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employed with success by every demagogue. When the Government contemplated the expulsion of these Jews, I stood up for them, and pointed out in the *Berliner Tageblatt* the inhumanity and the folly of such a measure. Together with some colleagues, Jews and non-Jews, I started University courses for these Eastern-born Jews, and I must add that in this matter we enjoyed official recognition and considerable assistance from the Ministry of Education.

These and similar happenings have awakened in me the Jewish national sentiment. I am a national Jew in the sense that I demand the preservation of the Jewish nationality as of every other. I look upon Jewish nationality as a fact, and I think that every Jew ought to come to definite conclusions on Jewish questions on the basis of this fact. I regard the growth of Jewish self-assertion as being in the interests of non-Jews as well as of Jews. That was the main motive of my

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joining the Zionist movement. For me Zionism is not merely a question of colonisation. The Jewish nation is a living thing, and the sentiment of Jewish nationalism must be developed both in Palestine and everywhere else. To deny the Jew's nationality in the Diaspora is, indeed, deplorable. If one adopts the point of view of confining Jewish ethnic nationalism to Palestine, then to all intents and purposes one denies the existence of a Jewish people. In that case one should have the courage to carry through assimilation as quickly and as completely as possible.

We live in a time of intense and perhaps exaggerated nationalism. But my Zionism does not exclude cosmopolitan views. I believe in the actuality of Jewish nationality, and I believe that every Jew has duties towards his co-religionists. The meaning of Zionism is thus many-sided. To Jews who despair in the Ukrainian hell or in Poland it opens out hopes of a more human existence.

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Through the return of Jews to Palestine, and so to a normal and healthy economic life, Zionism involves a creative function, which should enrich mankind at large. But the main point is that Zionism must tend to enhance the dignity and self-respect of the Jews in the Diaspora. I have always been annoyed by the undignified assimilationist cravings and strivings which I have observed in so many of my friends.

Through the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine, the Jewish people will again be in a position to bring its creative abilities into full play without hindrance. Through the Jewish University and similar institutions the Jewish people will not only help forward its own national renaissance, but will enrich its moral culture and knowledge, and will once again, as it was centuries ago, be guided into better ways of life than those which are inevitably imposed on it in present conditions. (1921)

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### III

The rebuilding of Palestine is for us Jews not a mere matter of charity or emigration: it is a problem of paramount importance for the Jewish people. Palestine is first and foremost not a refuge for East European Jews, but the incarnation of a re-awakening sense of national solidarity. But is it opportune to revive and to strengthen this sense of solidarity? To that question I must reply with an unqualified affirmative, not only because that answer expresses my instinctive feeling, but also, I believe, on rational grounds. (Let us glance at the history of the Jews in Germany during the last century or so.) A hundred years ago our ancestors, with very few exceptions, still lived in the Ghetto. They were poor, and were separated from the Gentiles by a barrier of religious traditions, secular forms of life and legal restrictions. In their spiritual development they were confined to



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their own literature, and were influenced but faintly by the immense impetus which the Renaissance had given to the intellectual life of Europe. But in one respect these men, humbly placed and scantily regarded as they were, had a distinct advantage over us. Each one of them was bound by every fibre of his being to a community which embraced his whole existence, of which he felt himself a full member, and which made on him no demand that ran counter to his natural mode of thought. Our ancestors of those days were rather cramped both materially and spiritually, but as a social organism they were in an enviable state of psychological equilibrium. Then came emancipation. It opened undreamt-of vistas of progress. Individual Jews rapidly became at home in the higher strata of economic and social life. They eagerly absorbed the brilliant achievements of Western art and science. They threw themselves with ardour into these develop-

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ments, and themselves made contributions of permanent value. In the process they adopted the ways of life of the non-Jewish world, became increasingly estranged from their own religious and social tradition, acquired non-Jewish habits, customs and modes of thought. It seemed as though they were going to be completely dissolved in the surrounding peoples, so much more numerous than themselves, so superior in their political and cultural organisation, and that in a few generations no visible trace of them would remain. The complete disappearance of the Jews in Central and Western Europe seemed inevitable. But things turned out differently. Nations with racial differences appear to have instincts which work against their fusion. The assimilation of the Jews to the European nations among whom they lived, in language, in customs, and to some extent even in the forms of religious organisation, could not eradicate the feeling of a lack of kinship be-

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tween them and those among whom they lived. In the last resort, this instinctive feeling of lack of kinship is referable to the law of the conservation of energy. For this reason it cannot be eradicated by any amount of well-meant pressure. Nationalities do not want to be fused: they want to go each its own way. A state of peace can be brought about only if they mutually tolerate and respect one another. This demands above all things that we Jews become once more conscious of our nationality, and regain the self-respect which is necessary to our national existence. We must learn once more to avow our ancestry and our history; we must once more take upon ourselves, as a nation, cultural tasks of a kind calculated to strengthen our feeling of solidarity. It is not sufficient for us to take part as individuals in the cultural work of mankind: we must also set our hands to some work which can serve the ends of our corporate national existence. In

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this way and in this way only can the Jewish people regain its health.

It is from this point of view that I look upon the Zionist movement. History has to-day allotted us the task of contributing actively to the economic and cultural reconstruction of Palestine. Inspired men of genius and vision have laid the foundations of our work, to which many of the best among us are prepared to devote their whole lives. It were well if all of us felt the full significance of the work and contributed each his utmost to its success.

It was in America that I first discovered the Jewish people. I have seen any number of Jews, but the Jewish people I had never met either in Berlin or elsewhere in Germany. This Jewish people, which I found in America, came from Russia, Poland and Eastern Europe generally. These men and women still retain a healthy national feeling; it has not yet been destroyed by the process

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of atomisation and dispersion. I found these people extraordinarily ready for self-sacrifice and practically creative. They have, for instance, managed in a short time to secure the future of the projected University in Jerusalem, at any rate so far as the Medical Faculty is concerned. I also found that it was mostly the middle classes and the ordinary folk, and not those enjoying a high social position or any natural advantages, who had most conspicuously preserved the healthy feeling of belonging together and the willingness to make sacrifices. The impression that I gained there is that if we really succeed in establishing a nucleus of the Jewish people in Palestine, we shall once more have a spiritual centre, notwithstanding that the great majority of us are scattered over the world, and the feeling of isolation will disappear. That is the great redeeming effect which I anticipate from the rebuilding of Palestine.

(1921)

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### IV

I am convinced that our colonising work in Palestine will be successful in the sense that we shall create there a completely coherent community, well fitted to form a moral and spiritual centre for the Jewish people. Therein, and not on the economic side, I see the real significance for us all of the work of reconstruction. In my opinion it is not so important for Palestine to become economically independent at the earliest possible moment as for it to possess a high spiritual and moral value for the whole Jewish people. From this point of view much has already been achieved by the revival of Hebrew. Institutions for the pursuit of the arts and sciences must follow. In this connection I attach the greatest importance to the Hebrew University. Palestine will not solve the Jewish problem, but its development will

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mean a revival of the soul of the Jewish people. (1923)

### V

Generally speaking, it does not accord with my ideal that communities bound together by the bond of race or tradition should make special efforts to cultivate and emphasise their separateness. In so far, however, as a given community is attacked as such, it is bound to defend itself as such, in order that its individual members may be able to maintain their material and spiritual interests. Corporate action is needed to save the individual from those spiritual dangers which isolation necessarily entails. Whoever understands this clearly must approve of united action by all Jews for a corporate purpose, be he never so unsympathetic in principle to nationalism.

It is for me beyond any shadow of doubt

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that in present circumstances the rebuilding of Palestine is the only object which has a sufficiently strong appeal to stimulate the Jews to effective corporate action. It is the immortal service of Herzl that he was the first to see this clearly and to draw the right practical conclusions. For this reason I am convinced that every Jew who cares at all for the health and the dignity of Jewry must co-operate with all his power in the realisation of Herzl's ideal.

The German Jew who works for the Jewish people and for the Jewish home in Palestine no more ceases to be a German than the Jew who becomes baptised and changes his name ceases to be a Jew. The two attachments are grounded in realities of different kinds. The antithesis is not between Jew and German, but between honesty and lack of character. He who remains true to his origin, race and tradition will also remain loyal to the State of which he is a subject. He who



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is faithless to the one will also be faithless to the other. (1926)

### VI

The greatest enemies of Jewish national consciousness and Jewish dignity are fatty degeneration—by which I mean the loss of moral fibre which results from wealth and comfort—and a kind of spiritual dependence on the surrounding non-Jewish world, which is a consequence of the disruption of Jewish corporate life. The best in a man can be brought out only when he belongs entirely to a human group. Hence there is grave moral danger in the position of the Jew who has lost contact with his own national group, and is regarded as an alien by the group among which he lives. Often enough a situation of this kind has produced a despicable and joyless egotism.

The external pressure on the Jewish people is particularly heavy at the present time.

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Yet our very sufferings have been wholesome. There has set in a revival of Jewish corporate life, of which the last generation but one could not have dreamt. Under the influence of the newly awakened sense of Jewish solidarity, the colonisation of Palestine, carried out by able and devoted leaders in the teeth of apparently insuperable difficulties, has already produced such favourable results that I cannot doubt its permanent effect. This work is of high value for the Jews of the whole world. Palestine will become a cultural home for all Jews, a refuge for the worst sufferers from oppression, a field of activity for the best among us, a unifying ideal and a source of spiritual health for the Jews of every country.

(1929)

## THE JEWS AND PALESTINE



## THE JEWS AND PALESTINE

### I

THE Palestine problem, as I see it, is two-fold. There is first the business of settling the Jews in the country. This demands external assistance on a large scale; it cannot be successfully accomplished unless the national resources of Jewry are laid under contribution. The second task is that of stimulating private initiative, especially in the commercial and industrial spheres.

The deepest impression left on me by Zionist work in Palestine is that of the self-sacrifice of the young men and women workers. Gathered here from all sorts of different environments, they have succeeded, under the influence of a common ideal, in forming themselves into closely-knit communities and in working together on lines of systematic

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co-operation. I was also most favourably impressed by the spirit of initiative shown in the urban development. There is something here that almost suggests an avalanche. One feels that the work is being borne along on the wings of a strong national sentiment. Nothing else could explain the extraordinarily rapid advance, especially on the sea-coast near Tel-Aviv.

At no time did I get the impression that the Arab problem might threaten the development of the Palestine project. I believe rather that, among the working classes especially, Jew and Arab on the whole get on excellently together. The difficulties which are as it were inherent in the situation do not rise above the threshold of consciousness when one is on the spot. The problem of the rehabilitation and sanitation of the country seems incomparably more difficult.

It is a common thing for Jews to miss the significance of the Palestine question: they

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do not see what it has to do with them. It is indeed easy to ask what it matters to a scattered nation of so many millions whether a million or a million and a half of them are settled in Palestine. But for me the importance of all this Zionist work lies precisely in the effect that it will have on those Jews who will not themselves live in Palestine. We must distinguish in this connection between internal and external effects. The internal effect, in my opinion, will be a healthier Jewry: that is to say, the Jews will acquire that happiness in feeling themselves at one, that sense of being self-sufficient, which a common ideal cannot fail to evoke. This is already evident in the younger generation of our day—not among the young Zionists only—and distinguishes it, greatly to its advantage, from earlier generations, whose endeavours to be absorbed in non-Jewish society produced an almost tragic emptiness. That is the internal effect. The external

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effect I see in the status which a human group can attain only by collective and productive work. I believe that the existence of a Jewish cultural centre will strengthen the moral and political position of the Jews all over the world, by virtue of the very fact that there will be in existence a kind of embodiment of the interests of the whole Jewish people.

(1927)

## II

The Hebrew University in Jerusalem is to be organised in such a way as to meet the existing requirements of the country for scientific research institutes. It cannot be compared in its initial stages with a fully equipped University in the West. It must begin with a number of research institutes devoted to the scientific investigation of the natural conditions of Palestine. The first to be considered will be an Institute of Agriculture, and then probably a Chemical Insti-



## THE JEWS AND PALESTINE

tute. These Institutes must be in the closest touch with existing and future experimental stations and agricultural schools. The next most urgent need is for an Institute of Microbiology, which on the practical side of its activities will help to fight epidemics in Palestine. Then for one of the early foundations we have to consider an Institute of Oriental Studies, which will have for its province the scientific exploration of the country and its historical monuments, and the philological study of its languages, Hebrew and Arabic, and possibly of other Oriental languages as well. These Institutes will lay the foundation of scientific research work in Palestine. For the present there is less need for actual teaching by professors and lecturers. Indeed, it is positively undesirable to encourage the Jewish population of Palestine, which as yet is very small and can grow but slowly, to repeat the old mistake of one-sided devotion to the professions and intellectual pursuits. On the

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contrary, the thing to aim at is a normal distribution of the Jewish population among the various occupations. The notorious one-sidedness of the occupational distribution of the Jews in the Diaspora must not be reproduced in Palestine. Only with an increase of the population will there be a gradual extension of the University, and a gradual addition of teaching activities to pure research work.

Due consideration must, however, also be given to the possibility that from the outset Jewish students will be attracted to the Hebrew University from all over the world. To what extent this tendency should be encouraged in the early stages is a problem requiring special consideration. But it is at any rate permissible to hope that in the course of time the Jerusalem University will grow into a centre of Jewish intellectual life, which will be of value not for Jews alone.

(1921)

## THE JEWS AND PALESTINE

### III

A University is a place in which the universality of the human spirit finds self-expression. Science and investigation recognise as their aim the truth and nothing but the truth. It is natural, therefore, that institutions which serve the interests of science should be a factor making for the union of nations and men. Unfortunately, the Universities of Europe to-day are for the most part nurseries of chauvinism and of a blind intolerance of all things foreign to the particular nation or race, of all things bearing the stamp of a different individuality. Under this régime the Jews are the principal sufferers, not only because they are thwarted in their desire for free participation and in their striving for education, but also because most Jews find themselves particularly cramped in this spirit of narrow nationalism. On this occasion of the birth of our University, I should like to

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express the hope that our University will always be free from this evil, that teachers and students will always preserve the consciousness that they serve their people best when they maintain its union with humanity and with the highest human values.

Jewish nationalism is a necessity to-day, because only through a consolidation of our national life can we eliminate those conflicts from which the Jews suffer at the present time. Let us hope that the time will soon come when this nationalism will have become so thoroughly a matter of course that it will no longer be necessary for us to give it special emphasis. Our affiliation with our past and with the present-day achievements of our people inspires us with assurance and pride in the face of the whole world. But our educational institutions in particular must regard it as one of their noblest tasks to keep our people free from nationalistic obscurantism and aggressive intolerance.

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Our University is still a modest undertaking. It is quite the correct policy to begin with a number of research institutes, out of which the University will develop naturally and organically. I am convinced that this development will make rapid progress, and that in the course of time this institution will demonstrate with the greatest clearness the achievements of which the Jewish spirit is capable.

A special task devolves upon the University in the spiritual direction and education of the labouring sections of our people in the land. In Palestine it is not our aim to create another people of city-dwellers, leading the same life as in the European cities, and governed by the standards and conceptions of the European bourgeoisie. We aim at creating a people of workers, at creating the Jewish village in the first place, and we desire that the treasures of culture should be accessible to our labouring class, especially since,

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as we know, Jews in all circumstances place education above all else. In this connection it devolves upon the University to create something unique in order to serve the specific needs of the forms of life developed by our people in Palestine.

All of us desire to co-operate in order that the University may accomplish its mission. When the significance of this cause is realised by the Jewish masses, our University will develop speedily into a great spiritual centre, which will evoke the respect of cultured mankind the world over. (1925)

## JEW AND ARAB





## JEW AND ARAB

### I

SHAKEN to its depths by the tragic catastrophe in Palestine, Jewry must now show that it is truly equal to the great task it has undertaken. It goes without saying that our devotion to the cause and our determination to continue the work of peaceful construction will not be weakened in the slightest by any such set-back. But what has to be done to obviate any possibility of a recurrence of such horrors?

The first and most important necessity is the creation of a *modus vivendi* with the Arab people. Friction is perhaps inevitable, but its evil consequences must be overcome by organised co-operation, so that the inflammable material may not be piled up to the point of danger. The absence of normal con-

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tact in every-day life is bound to produce an atmosphere of mutual fear and distrust, which is favourable to such lamentable outbursts of passion as we have witnessed. We Jews must show above all that our own history of suffering has given us sufficient understanding and psychological insight to know how to cope with this problem of psychology and organisation: the more so as no irreconcilable differences stand in the way of peace between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. Let us therefore above all be on our guard against blind chauvinism of any kind, and let us not imagine that reason and common-sense can be replaced by British bayonets.

But one demand we must certainly make of the Mandatory Power, which is responsible for the well-being of the country. Adequate protection must be afforded to those who are engaged in peaceful work. The measures devised for their protection must have regard on the one hand to the scattered position of

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the Jewish settlements, and on the other hand to the need for helping to smooth over national differences. It goes without saying that there must be adequate participation of Jews in the police force. The Mandatory Power cannot escape the reproach that this duty has not been fully carried out, quite apart from the fact that the responsible authorities misjudged the true state of affairs in the country.

The greatest danger in the present situation is that blind chauvinism may gain ground in our ranks. However firm the stand we make for the defence of our lives and property, we must not forget for a single moment that our national task is in its essence a supra-national matter, and that the strength of our whole movement rests in its moral justification, with which it must stand or fall. (Aug. 1929)

## II

It was with a wonderful enthusiasm and a deep sense of gratitude that the Jews, af-

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flicted more than any other people by the chaos and horror of the war, obtained from Great Britain a pledge to support the re-establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine. The Jewish people, beset with a thousand physical wrongs and moral degradations, saw in the British promise the sure rock on which it could re-create a Jewish national life in Palestine, which, by its very existence as well as by its material and intellectual achievements, would give the Jewish masses, dispersed all over the world, a new sense of hope, dignity, and pride. Jews of all lands gave of their best in man-power and in material wealth in order to fulfil the inspiration that had kept the race alive through a martyrdom of centuries. Within a brief decade some £10,000,000 were raised by voluntary contributions, and 100,000 picked Jews entered Palestine to redeem by their physical labour the almost derelict land. Deserts were irrigated, forests planted,

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swamps drained, and their crippling diseases subdued. A work of peace was created which, although still perhaps small in size, compelled the admiration of every observer.

Has the rock on which we have built begun to shake? A considerable section of the British press now meets our aspirations with lack of understanding, with coldness, and with disfavour. What has happened?

Arab mobs, organised and fanaticised by political intriguers working on the religious fury of the ignorant, attacked scattered Jewish settlements and murdered and plundered wherever no resistance was offered. In Hebron, the inmates of a rabbinical college, innocent youths who had never handled weapons in their lives, were butchered in cold blood; in Safed the same fate befell aged rabbis and their wives and children. Recently some Arabs raided a Jewish orphan settlement where the pathetic remnants of the great Russian pogroms had found a haven

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of refuge. Is it not then amazing that an orgy of such primitive brutality upon a peaceful population has been utilised by a certain section of the British press for a campaign of propaganda directed, not against the authors and instigators of these brutalities, but against their victims?

No less disappointing is the amazing degree of ignorance of the character and the achievement of Jewish reconstruction in Palestine displayed in many organs of the press. A decade has elapsed since the policy of the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine was officially endorsed by the British Government with the almost unanimous support of the entire British press and of the leaders of all political parties. On the basis of that official recognition, which was approved by almost every civilised Government, and which found its legal embodiment in the Palestine Mandate, Jews have sent their sons and daughters and have given

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their voluntary offerings for this great work of peaceful reconstruction. I think it may be stated without fear of exaggeration that, except for the war efforts of the European nations, our generation has seen no national effort of such spiritual intensity and such heroic devotion as that which the Jews have shown during the last ten years in favour of a work of peace in Palestine. When one travels through the country, as I had the good fortune to do a few years ago, and sees young pioneers, men and women of magnificent intellectual and moral calibre, breaking stones and building roads under the blazing rays of the Palestinian sun; when one sees flourishing agricultural settlements shooting up from the long-deserted soil under the intensive efforts of the Jewish settlers; when one sees the development of water-power and the beginnings of an industry adapted to the needs and possibilities of the country, and, above all, the growth of an edu-

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cational system ranging from the kindergarten to the university, in the language of the Bible—what observer, whatever his origin or faith, can fail to be seized by the magic of such amazing achievement and of such almost superhuman devotion? Is it not bewildering that, after all this, brutal massacres by a fanaticised mob can destroy all appreciation of the Jewish effort in Palestine and lead to a demand for the repeal of the solemn pledges of official support and protection?

Zionism has a two-fold basis. It arose on the one hand from the fact of Jewish suffering. It is not my intention to paint here a picture of the Jewish martyrdom throughout the ages, which has arisen from the homelessness of the Jew. Even to-day there is an intensity of Jewish suffering throughout the world of which the public opinion of the civilised West never obtains a comprehensive view. In the whole of Eastern Europe the danger of physical attack against the indi-



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vidual Jew is constantly present. The degrading disabilities of old have been transformed into restrictions of an economic character, while restrictive measures in the educational sphere, such as the "numerus clausus" at the universities, seek to suppress the Jew in the world of intellectual life. There is, I am sure, no need to stress at this time of day that there is a Jewish problem in the Western world also. How many non-Jews have any insight into the spiritual suffering and distortion, the degradation and moral disintegration engendered by the mere fact of the homelessness of a gifted and sensitive people? What underlies all these phenomena is the basic fact, which the first Zionists recognised with profound intuition, that the Jewish problem cannot be solved by the assimilation of the individual Jew to his environment. Jewish individuality is too strong to be effaced by such assimilation, and too conscious to be ready for such self-efface-

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ment. It is, of course, clear that it will never be possible to transplant to Palestine anything more than a minority of the Jewish people, but it has for a long time been the deep conviction of enlightened students of the problem, Jews and non-Jews alike, that the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine would raise the status and the dignity of those who would remain in their native countries, and would thereby materially assist in improving the relations between non-Jews and Jews in general.

But Zionism springs from an even deeper motive than Jewish suffering. It is rooted in a Jewish spiritual tradition, whose maintenance and development are for Jews the *raison d'être* of their continued existence as a community. In the re-establishment of the Jewish nation in the ancient home of the race, where Jewish spiritual values could again be developed in a Jewish atmosphere,

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the most enlightened representatives of Jewish individuality see the essential preliminary to the regeneration of the race and the setting free of its spiritual creativeness.

It is by these tendencies and aspirations that the Jewish reconstruction in Palestine is informed. Zionism is not a movement inspired by chauvinism or by a *sacro egoismo*. I am convinced that the great majority of the Jews would refuse to support a movement of that kind. Nor does Zionism aspire to divest anyone in Palestine of any rights or possessions he may enjoy. On the contrary, we are convinced that we shall be able to establish a friendly and constructive co-operation with the kindred Arab race which will be a blessing to both sections of the population materially and spiritually. During the whole of the work of Jewish colonisation not a single Arab has been dispossessed; every acre of land acquired by the Jews has been bought at a price fixed by buyer and seller. Indeed,

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every visitor has testified to the enormous improvement in the economic and sanitary standard of the Arab population resulting from the Jewish colonisation. Friendly personal relations between the Jewish settlements and the neighbouring Arab villages have been formed throughout the country. Jewish and Arab workers have associated in the trade unions of the Palestine railways, and the standard of living of the Arabs has been raised. Arab scholars can be found working in the great library of the Hebrew University, while the study of the Arabic language and civilisation forms one of the chief subjects of study at this University. Arab workmen have participated in the evening courses conducted at the Jewish Technical Institute at Haifa. The native population has come to realise in an ever-growing measure the benefits, economic, sanitary and intellectual, which the Jewish work of reconstruction has bestowed on the whole country and

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all its inhabitants. Indeed, one of the most comforting features in the present crisis has been the reports of personal protection afforded by Arabs to their Jewish fellow-citizens against the attacks of the fanaticised mob.

I submit, therefore, that the Zionist movement is entitled, in the name of its higher objectives and on the strength of the support which has been promised to it most solemnly by the civilised world, to demand that its unprecedented reconstructive effort—carried out in a country which still largely lies fallow, and in which, by methods of intensive cultivation such as the Jews have applied, room can be found for hundreds of thousands of new settlers without detriment to the native population—shall not be defeated by a small clique of agitators, even if they wear the garb of ministers of the Islamic religion. Does public opinion in Great Britain realise that the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, who is

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the centre of all the trouble, and speaks so loudly in the name of all the Moslems, is a young political adventurer of not much more, I understand, than thirty years of age, who in 1920 was sentenced to several years' imprisonment for his complicity in the riots of that year, but was pardoned under the terms of an amnesty? The mentality of this man may be gauged from a recent statement he gave to an interviewer accusing me, of all men, of having demanded the rebuilding of the Temple on the site of the Mosque of Omar. Is it tolerable that, in a country where ignorant fanaticism can so easily be incited to rapine and murder by interested agitators, so utterly irresponsible and unscrupulous a politician should be enabled to continue to exercise his evil influence, garbed in all the spiritual sanctity of religion, and invested with all the temporal powers that this involves in an Eastern country?

The realisation of the great aims embodied

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in the Mandate for Palestine depends to a very large degree on the public opinion of Great Britain, on its press, and on its statesmen. The Jewish people is entitled to expect that its work of peace shall receive the active and benevolent support of the Mandatory Power. It is entitled to demand that those found guilty in the recent riots shall be adequately punished, and that the men in whose hands is laid the responsible task of the administration of a country of such a unique past and such unique potentialities for the future shall be so instructed as to ensure that this great trust, bestowed by the civilised world on the Mandatory Power, is carried out with vision and courage in the daily tasks of routine administration. Jews do not wish to live in the land of their fathers under the protection of British bayonets: they come as friends of the kindred Arab nation. What they expect of Great Britain is that it shall promote the growth of friendly relations be-

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tween Jews and Arabs, that it shall not tolerate poisonous propaganda, and that it shall create such organs of security in the country as will afford adequate protection to life and peaceful labour.

The Jews will never abandon the work of reconstruction which they have undertaken. The reaction of all Jews, Zionist and non-Zionist alike, to the events of the last few weeks has shown this clearly enough. But it lies in the hands of the Mandatory Power materially to further or materially to hamper the progress of the work. It is of fundamental importance that British public opinion and the Governments of Great Britain and of Palestine shall feel themselves responsible for this great trust, not because Great Britain once undertook this responsibility in legal form, but because they are deeply convinced of the significance and importance of the task, and believe that its realisation will tend to promote the progress and the peace of



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mankind, and to right a great historic wrong. I cannot believe that the greatest colonial Power in the world will fail when it is faced with the task of placing its unique colonising experience at the service of the reconstruction of the ancient home of the People of the Bible. The task may not be an easy one for the Mandatory Power, but for the success it will attain it is assured of the undying gratitude not only of the Jews but of all that is noblest in mankind.

(Letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, 12 Oct. 1929)

### III

One who, like myself, has cherished for many years the conviction that the humanity of the future must be built up on an intimate community of the nations, and that aggressive nationalism must be conquered, can see a future for Palestine only on the basis of peaceful co-operation between the two peo-

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ples who are at home in the country. For this reason I should have expected that the great Arab people will show a truer appreciation of the need which the Jews feel to re-build their national home in the ancient seat of Judaism; I should have expected that by common effort ways and means would be found to render possible an extensive Jewish settlement in the country. I am convinced that the devotion of the Jewish people to Palestine will benefit all the inhabitants of the country, not only materially, but also culturally and nationally. I believe that the Arab renaissance in the vast expanse of territory now occupied by the Arabs stands only to gain from Jewish sympathy. I should welcome the creation of an opportunity for absolutely free and frank discussion of these possibilities, for I believe that the two great Semitic peoples, each of which has in its way contributed something of lasting value to the civilisation of the West, may have a great

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future in common, and that instead of facing each other with barren enmity and mutual distrust, they should support each other's national and cultural endeavours, and should seek the possibility of sympathetic co-operation. I think that those who are not actively engaged in politics should above all contribute to the creation of this atmosphere of confidence.

I deplore the tragic events of last August not only because they revealed human nature in its lowest aspects, but also because they have estranged the two peoples and have made it temporarily more difficult for them to approach one another. But come together they must, in spite of all.

(Letter to the Palestinian Arab Paper

*Falastin*, 28 January 1930)



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